

### Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 12, 20, 21, 23, 24, 37, and 42 are amended herein.

Claims 9-11, 13-19, and 25-29 are canceled herein without prejudice.

5 New claims 44-55 have been added.

Claims 1-8, 12, 20-24, 37, and 40-55 are pending in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method implemented by a central appointments server comprising:

10 enabling a selection of a service provider from a plurality of service providers accessible via the central appointments server responsive to receiving a request received from a user system over a network for to make an on-line appointment availability of a service provider during a time period;

15 determining available appointment times within the time period for the selected service provider through use of a the central appointments server having access to a central appointment database that stores configured to store calendars for a the plurality of service providers, including a first calendar for the selected service provider;

transmitting the available appointment times obtained from the first calendar to the user system;

20 receiving a selected notification of a selection of an appointment time from the available appointment times; and

responsive to the notification causing a second calendar maintained by the selected service provider separate from the central appointments server to be checked to verify

that the selected appointment time is available in the second calendar; and

setting an on-line appointment between the user system and the service provider at the selected appointment time if the selected appointment time is verified to be available in the second calendar.

2. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the time period is a day.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein receiving the request for appointment availability comprises receiving a time duration for the on-line appointment, and wherein determining the available appointment times comprises identifying receiving those times during the time period that the service provider is available for at least the time duration.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 44, wherein setting the on-line appointment comprises:

transmitting verification information for the on-line appointment to the user system,

receiving a verification of the verification information for the on-line appointment; and

subsequently setting the on-line appointment between the user system and the service provider at the selected appointment time when the verification has been received.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 44 ~~4~~,  
wherein setting the on-line appointment comprises setting a requested online  
appointment, and subsequently receiving a confirmation for the requested on-line  
appointment.

6. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 5, further comprising:  
updating the requested on-line appointment to a confirmed on-line appointment  
after the confirmation has been received.

7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the time period is a  
predetermined day, and wherein the network is the Internet.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:  
~~rendering if~~ the selected appointment time for the selected service provider is  
unavailable in the second calendar, outputting an indication that the selected appointment  
is unavailable for communication to the user system.

9.-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable media comprising instructions that, if executed by a server device, cause the server device ~~are executable~~ to implement an on-line scheduling application that is configured to:

responsive to receive a request for to make an on-line appointment, output a user interface configured to accept input of search terms and cause a search of a directory of service providers based on the search terms availability of to facilitate a selection of a service provider from the directory;

upon selection of the service provider from the directory, determine available appointment slots for the service provider through use of a central appointments server having access to a central appointment database configured to store that stores a first calendar for at least the service provider;

transmit the available appointment slots obtained from the first calendar to a user system;

receive a selected appointment slot from the available appointment slots;

cause a second calendar maintained by the service provider separately from the first calendar to be checked to verify that the selected appointment slot is available in the second calendar; and

set an on-line appointment between the user system and the service provider at the selected appointment slot if the selected appointment slot is verified to be available in the second calendar.

13-19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) An on-line appointment system, comprising:  
an appointment database configured to store calendars for one or more service  
providers[[,]] in memory of the on-line appointment system; and  
an appointment server device configured to;  
5 furnish access to the calendars stored by the appointment database via a  
network to schedule appointments with the one or more service providers;  
expose a business directory of service providers that is searchable via a user  
system to facilitate selection of the one or more service providers to schedule the  
appointments;  
10 obtain available appointment times for communication to the user system  
using the calendars stored by the appointment database for the one or more service  
providers that are selected using the directory;  
schedule appointments at selected appointment times between the user  
system and the one or more service providers based on a determination that the  
15 selected appointment times are available in one or more local software calendars  
maintained by the one or more service providers, the one or more local software  
calendars being separate and distinct from the calendars stored by the appointment  
database; and  
thereafter permit confirmation, by the one or more service providers, of the  
20 appointments that have been scheduled with the one or more service providers[[,]]  
~~a synchronization application configured to review appointments that have been~~  
~~scheduled with the one or more service providers to determine if the appointments~~  
~~conflict with entries in one or more local software calendars maintained by the one or~~

~~more service providers, the one or more local software calendars being separate and distinct from the calendars stored by the appointment database.~~

21. (Currently Amended) An on-line appointment system as recited in claim 20, wherein said appointment server ~~device is configured to send~~ sends reminders for confirmed appointments.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) An on-line appointment system as recited in claim 20, ~~further comprising a~~ wherein the appointment server device is configured to include the business directory of service providers.

24. (Currently Amended) An on-line appointment system as recited in claim 20, wherein said appointment database is further configured to store ~~further stores~~ information for at least one of said one or more service providers.

25-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) An on-line appointment system as recited in claim 20, wherein ~~the~~ a synchronization application automatically synchronizes the calendars of the one or more service providers in the appointment database with the one or more local software calendars of the one or more service providers ~~provides~~.

38-39. (Canceled)

40. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first calendar is an online calendar and the second calendar is a local calendar.

41. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein causing the second calendar maintained by the service provider to be checked comprises determining whether the selected appointment time conflicts with an item on the second calendar.

42. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~wherein~~ causing the second calendar maintained by the service provider to be checked comprises determining whether the selected appointment time for the on-line appointment should be accepted or declined.

43. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 42, wherein causing the second calendar maintained by the service provider to be checked comprises causing the selected appointment time for the on-line appointment to be automatically accepted or declined.

44. (New) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising setting an on-line appointment between the user system and the selected service provider at the selected appointment time if the selected appointment time is verified to be available in the second calendar.

45. (New) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the selection comprises outputting a form configured to accept input of search terms to cause a search of a directory that lists the plurality of service providers.

46. (New) A method as recited in claim 45, wherein enabling the selection further comprises:

receiving search terms input to the form via the user system;

generating a list of service providers from the directory that match the input search terms; and

communicating the list of matching service providers to the user system.

47. (New) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:  
conducting a search of a database that lists the plurality of service providers based on search information obtained from the user system;

communicating a list of service providers from the database that match the search information to the user system; and

obtaining the selection of the service provider from the user system based on the list.



48. (New) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the selection comprises exposing a directory of service providers that is searchable via a user system to facilitate the selection.

5 49. (New) A method as recited in claim 48, wherein the directory of service providers includes a plurality of categories arranged in a hierarchy, each listed service provider of the directory associated with one or more of the plurality of categories that relate to services offered by the listed service provider.

10 50. (New) A method as recited in claim 49, further comprising conducting a search of the directory based at least in part on search information describing one or more of the plurality of categories obtained from the user system.

51. (New) One or more computer-readable media comprising instructions that, if executed by a server device, cause the server device to perform a method comprising:

receiving at least one request from a user system to cause a search of a directory maintained by the server device that lists a plurality of service providers registered with an on-line appointment system;

conducting the search of the directory based on at least one search term to identify one or more of the plurality of service providers that match the at least one search term;

transmitting search results describing the matching service providers to the user system;

receiving, from the user system, a selection of a service provider based on the search results;

accessing a first calendar associated with the selected service provider to identify available appointment slots for making on-line appointments with the selected service provider;

transmitting data describing the available appointment slots for the selected service provider to the user system;

receiving, from the user system, a selection of one of the available appointment slots; and

selectively scheduling the on-line appointment between the user system and the selected service provider at the selected appointment slot based upon a determination of whether the one or more selected appointment slot is available in a second calendar maintained the service provider separately from the first calendar.

52. (New) The computer-readable media of claim 51, wherein transmitting the search results comprises transmitting data sufficient to enable the user system to render a user interface having the search results.

5 53. (New) The computer-readable media of claim 51, further comprising configuring a mark-up language document to include the search results, wherein transmitting the search results comprises transmitting the mark-up language document for rendering by the user system.

10 54. (New) The computer-readable media of claim 51, wherein selectively scheduling the on-line appointment comprises receiving a notification indicating that the selected appointment slot is available in the second calendar, and in response to the notification, setting the on-line appointment at the selected appointment slot.

15 55. (New) The computer-readable media of claim 51, wherein selectively scheduling the on-line appointment comprises receiving a notification indicating that the selected appointment slot is not available in the second calendar, and in response to the notification, outputting an indication that the selected appointment slot is unavailable for communication to the user system.